

Touring group treats kids

By RON GARBINSKI

Once upon a time in a Harrison classroom, a young and charming teacher decided to do something never done before in the Farmington School District.

She took 15 students and daringly transformed them into a touring drama company, travelling the district in search of laughs. Exploring elementary gyms and cafeterias, they soon found that their hard work had paid off.

Mrs. Barbara Dubb and her drama II class at Harrison High School want-

ed to do something different. So they decided to take laughter to area elementary students instead of having the youngsters come to the entertainment.

"My idea was to do something unique in Farmington," explains Mrs. Dubb. "So when the class got together at the beginning of the semester, we decided to do kids theater and put on plays for local elementary students."

"WE WANTED TO DO several plays, but only were able to do one because it was so time consuming. Our production, 'The Timid Dragon,' has

received good reception and the kids really loved it. Many of the schools even sent us letters and drawings telling us how much they enjoyed the play."

"Since kids seldom get the chance to see live performances, the students took advantage of the opportunity to do something entertaining as well as providing an outlet for their acting skills."

So the touring group, made up of juniors and seniors, would take off from class once a week and travel to elementary schools. There they would perform their play about a timid drag-

on to capacity crowds packed into school gyms and cafeterias.

"One of the most exciting aspects of our touring play was just sitting behind the scene and watching the faces of the little kids light up," says one young actress.

"These kids really loved our show and it was a great experience to play before such a young audience," adds another.

After each performance, the group would mingle with the audience and talk with the kids. "Sometimes that would be the most fun. Just watching them laugh and make funny faces was a real treat," continues one of the players.

BUT THE PLAY was not the only thing the class did during its semester together, explains Mrs. Dubb. It did all kinds of crazy things. "They all were pretty good friends before they entered this class, but now they are even better friends because of the good times they've shared."

"We had an opportunity to do a lot of dumb things in the classroom that we probably would not have done otherwise," says Mrs. Dubb's students. "We just felt free to open ourselves up to each other."

This was the first time Harrison ever offered drama II as an elective and Mrs. Dubb hopes to continue the course, someday possibly adding drama III for students desiring to improve their acting abilities.

"Next semester the class might do the same things or something completely different for all I know," she says. "But just as long as they enjoy it and our audiences love it, I guess we'll continue to perform for the kids. But it takes a lot of work and some of the students have to skip class to do it. And that can cause a lot of problems."

But as one aspiring young actor concludes, "This was not the climax of our drama class, but only just a tangent."



Harrison High's touring young players perform their version of 'The Timid Dragon' before a captivated audience at Beechview Elementary.



Val Gazette, a fair young maiden, helps Rob Canton, who plays the timid dragon, with last minute touches on his make up. (Staff photos by Harry G. Mauthe)

Freedom thoughts by high schoolers

By KIM PUTNAM

What do students at Harrison High School think about the bicentennial celebration? "Not much," replied Rose Steeg, a junior at Harrison.

The 200-year celebration of American freedom has gone from commercial in the students' opinion. Patriotism has taken on the form of the dollar.

Retailers are now mass producing bicentennial items such as bumper stickers, buttons, clothes and posters. In addition, such things as coffee and garbage cans are done red, white and blue and embossed with the American eagle.

"This country does not survive on the colors of red, white and blue, but on its spirit," commented senior class president Dave Fleisher.

SOME STUDENTS, however, do not mind the commercialism. Sophomore Danny Lutz visited Washington and was very impressed by what the city is doing. "They're rearranging an old train station in a bicentennial motif and minting new coins. It looks good, but I am sick of what the stores and television is doing to it."

What is the most irritating to students is that the celebration literally began two years ago in January 1974. Most students have had it with the commercialized bicentennial that any patriotism has been replaced by

apathy. Many have tried to ignore it but found radio and television stations are filled with insincere patriotism.

Carol Ellmann, a senior said, "I used to enjoy watching the bicentennial minute on CBS, but now it seems like they have run out of well known people to do them and use unknowns. Also, the facts are either so trivial that it seems dumb or they are presented very biased."

ANOTHER PROBLEM with the celebration is the fact that few students understand what is being celebrated. One year, a group of students took the part of the Constitution that guaranteed citizens the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, door to door, telling the people it was a ball to be voted on. Many of those people became outraged, claiming it was communism.

At Harrison, most know who George Washington was and what the American Revolution was, but do not know what caused it or what the goal of sacrificed for independence.

"Nobody even knows why we are celebrating. They know the basic facts of the American Revolution but very little of the actual struggle. I don't see any point in celebrating something no one knows anything about. Anyway, it should be celebrated on the fourth of July only," said senior Doug Braddock.

Libraries offer winter programs

The Farmington and Farmington Hills branches of the library are offering a series of adult and children's programs for the winter months.

An informal book discussion for adults in the city branch will start on Thursday, Jan. 29, and continue every other Thursday for eight weeks at 10 a.m. The first meeting of the group will discuss the first volume of the American bicentennial series, "The Bastard," by John Jakes. On Feb. 12, Nena O'Neill's "Open Marriage" will be the topic.

Magician Greg Hoenstine and the Orchard Ridge Theater group will perform during the Valentine Day program on Tuesday, Feb. 10, in the Farmington branch and on Thursday, Feb. 12, in the Hills branch. Both programs begin at 7:30 p.m. Reservations will be taken beginning Monday, Feb. 2, in both libraries.

The Farmington Hills branch presents a variety of activities for preschoolers on the first Monday and third Thursday of each month. On Monday, Feb. 2, from 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. three films, "Yes, No, Stop, Go," "Right Thumb, Left Thumb," and "Alphabet of the Birds" will be shown.

Young animal lovers can see "A Night in the Pet Shop," "Mongrel Dog," and "Scruffy" on Thursday, Feb. 19 from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

THE HILLS LIBRARY also has programs for school-age youngsters on the second and fourth Saturdays of the month at 2 p.m.

On Saturday, Feb. 14, Valentine's Day films will be shown. Children will be able to watch "Vivian," "Grand Lives in Galway" and "Me and You Kangaroo."

A demonstration of early American yarn spinning and an early American fashion show will be presented on Saturday, Feb. 28.

Parents can register their preschoolers for story hours in the Hills branch library by phone or in person. The program is designed for children between the ages of three and five who can sit attentively, with some activity breaks, for 30 minutes without parental guidance. Activities will include stories, songs, puppets and creative dramatics. Enrollment is limited to 20 children per group.

Children between three and four years old can attend the story sessions on Monday, Jan. 26, from 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. and at the same time on Monday March 1, On Tuesday, Jan. 27, and Tuesday, March 2, the children can hear the stories from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Children ages four and five will have their story sessions on Wednesday, Jan. 28, and Wednesday, March 3, from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Other sessions for this age group will be Thursdays, Jan. 29 and March 4, from 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

First and second graders can attend a creative dramatics series in the Hills branch on Thursdays, Jan. 29 and March 4. Creative dramatics doesn't involve memorization of lines, just imagination. Registration for the series is limited to 18 youngsters. The sessions will meet on Thursday from 4:15 p.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Nature and craft classes for first and second graders will meet on Tuesday from 4 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. in the Hills branch from Jan. 27 through March 2. Class enrollment will be limited to 30 children. There is a \$1 fee for materials.

Third and fourth graders can learn colonial crafts on Fridays, from 4 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. Classes will be from Jan. 30 through March 5. A \$1 fee for materials will be charged at the time of registration. Class enrollment is limited to 20 children.

THE FARMINGTON BRANCH library will have a variety of free activities for pre-schoolers on the second Friday morning and the fourth Tuesday afternoon of each month. Registration is not necessary. Preschool nursery classes are encouraged to make appointments.

Children are asked to bring rhythm instruments to the library on Tuesday, Jan. 27, from 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Pie tins, spoons or other percussion instruments available at home can be brought.

Creepy Friday will be celebrated on Friday, Feb. 13, from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m. Creative dramatics and a movie will be part of the program. Movies about Harold, Horton and Homer will be shown on Tuesday, Feb. 24, from 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

School-age children can see the movies, "Outer Limits of the Sea," "Peewee had a Little Ape" and "Ponies" on Saturday, Feb. 21, from 2 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.

Pre-school story hours and art programs require registration by phone or in person. Children can be accepted for only one program, in order to be fair to all children. If registration in a second program is desired, the child will be placed on a waiting list. Farmington and Hills residents are given first preference.

As with the Hills library program,

the city's story hour is designed for three to five-year-olds who can sit still without parental supervision.

Four and five-year-olds will hear stories on Mondays, Jan. 26 and March 1, from 10:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Story sessions for three and four-year-olds will be on Tuesdays, Jan. 27 and March 2, from 9:30 a.m. to 10 a.m.

Registration for the art class must be made in person by a parent. Lessons will be on Mondays and Fridays at noon from Jan. 28 and 30 through March 18 and 19. A materials fee of \$3 must be paid at the time of registration. City and Hills residents will be given first preference.

CHILDREN WILL learn to use paints, scissors, ink, paste, clay and other materials. All sessions will revolve around a book or familiar story. If there are any objections concerning holidays which will be celebrated through the art class, they must be noted at the time of registration so another activity can be planned for the child.

First and second graders can be enrolled in a creative drama class which will be on Wednesdays, Jan. 28 to March 3, from 4:15 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. in the city branch library. Registration for this class is limited to 18 children.

The Farmington Welcome Wagon will meet at 7:30 p.m. in the Hills branch library on Feb. 10 and Feb. 13. Women of North Farmington will meet at 12:30 p.m. in the Hills branch.

Other meetings in the Hills branch include the Farmington Genealogical Society at 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 17, Feb. 18, the League of Women Voters will meet at 7:30 p.m. and the American Association of University Women will meet at 7:45 p.m.

The American Association of Retired Persons will meet in the library

at 1:30 p.m. on Feb. 20.

Meetings in the Farmington branch will include a meeting of the Farmington Historical Society on Jan. 28 at 8 p.m. A family story hour will be presented at 7 p.m. on Feb. 10. A bicentennial film program will be given on Feb. 19 at 7 p.m. The Farmington Historical society will have its meeting on Feb. 25 at 8 p.m.

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A special tribute "for his unending devotion to the needs of retarded children" was presented to Louis H. Vetraino (left) of Farmington Hills, by State Senator Joseph M. Snyder of St. Clair Shores. Vetraino is administrator of the Clinton-Aire Convalescent Center in Clinton Township. Vetraino, vice president of the Health Care Association of Michigan, pioneered the Foster Parents program at Madonna Nursing Center.